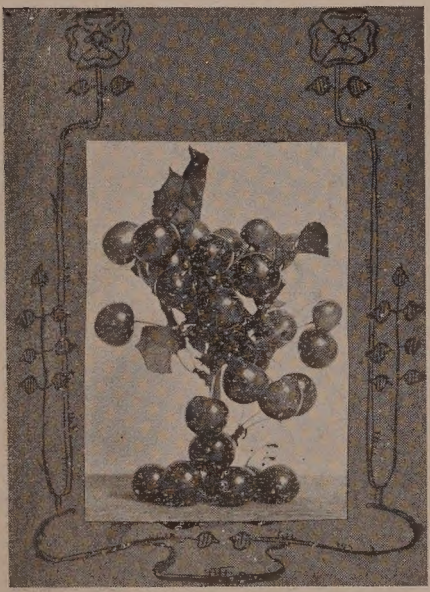
THE

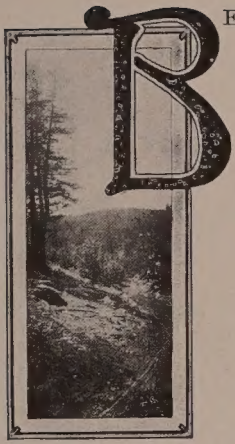
Rio Grande Valley

"The Egypt of America"



Belen the Heart of It

LOCATION

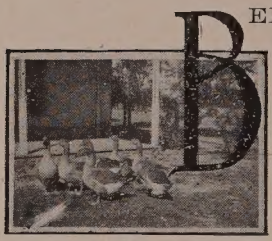


ELEN is located in the Rio Grande Valley, 223 miles north of El Paso and 550 miles south of Denver on the main line of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, in the center of the most fertile land in New Mexico.

Protected on the east by the lofty range of the Manzano Mountains and on the west by high Mesa lands, few places are more favored by Nature for homes or commerce.

It is indeed a wonderful revelation and relief to the tourist after days of travel over the high and arid stretch of country encountered on his westward way, to drop down into this broad, green valley and behold the waters of the Rio Grande slowly winding their way to the ocean, flanked on either side by luxurant foliage and with fields of green stretching back to the hills and mesas. It is here where the dust-covered traveler lingers to cool his parched lips with cold, sparkling water and to refresh and invigorate his body with deep draughts of pure, healthful air. In the center of this entrancing land lies the hustling, practical, ambitious, yet contented, city of Belen.

THE CITY OF BELEN



BELEN has a population of 3,000 energetic, enterprising, loyal citizens. In addition to its naturally beautiful surroundings the founders of the city were most generous in alloting broad avenues, streets and parks. At a great expense, trees of several of the most desirable varieties for shade, have been uniformly set out over the entire townsite, thus enhancing evenly its residence portions.

Not only were the townsite owners liberal in the manner described, but their foresight and generosity extended to providing a system of irrigation so that the lawns and gardens of all the homes within its boundaries might be watered and contribute to its general beauty.

We venture to say that no city of the Southwest whose growth is the result of immigration has built more substantially or well than has Belen. There is an utter absence of unsightly and uncomfortable shacks so prevalent in Western towns. Those who have sought homes here and built have obeyed the reigning sense of harmony and in consequence Belen's residences are made up of cozy bungalows, attractive cottages, even to imposing brick or concrete houses.

Belen has good schools, and instruction is imparted by an efficient corps of teachers. Students are given a high school course, preparing for the higher universities and colleges.

Thus it is that Belen has home advantages made possible by reason of its being so favorably situated where soil and moisture combine

to make the trees, flower gardens, vegetable patches, arbors and shrubbery add to the home beautiful.

COMMERCIAL CLUB

This organization was founded in 1906 by a number of leading business men of Belen, and incorporated under the laws of New Mexico, for the purpose of providing a medium to further the commercial, industrial and agricultural interests of the community.

As evidence of the zeal manifested, the club has now one of the finest buildings of the kind in New Mexico with sumptuously appointed reception and reading rooms, a spacious assembly hall, buffet, billiard and card rooms besides bowling alleys, where its members and visitors find amusement and relaxation in divers ways.

While the primary object of the organization is to promote the cooperation of business men and citizens in general in developing commerce, the elegant quarters afford ideal facilities for entertainments and social functions, thus widening the scope of its usefulness.

PASTIMES

For those who are devotees of our-door sport, Belen furnishes a variety of amusement. For horse-back riding or driving, miles of shaded roads lead through orchards, alfalfa and wheat fields, rendering the course both pleasant and instructive. Just east of the city is the mesa with its roads like unto macadam, an ideal speedway, running for miles and miles in every direction.

Here as elsewhere, the automobile, in many instances, has supplanted the horse for pleasure, and the honk-honk of these swift, powerful and luxurious machines is heard on our city streets and in the country.

The hunter is in the zenith of his delight. The mountains east twenty-five miles contain much big game such as bear, deer, wolves, mountain lions, and wild turkey. In season the rivers and lake abound with wild duck and geese and the hills are the home of countless quail, wild doves and other small game.

A gun club has also been organized. This club has secured a long lease on several lakes lying a few miles from the city. These lakes are the feeding grounds of thousand of wild duck, geese and swan during the Fall and Winter months. There are several crack shots in this organization and regular meets are enjoyed at the trap grounds adjacent to the city.

Belen boasts of a strong baseball organization and fans are not less enthusiastic than those who witness the large league games. Lawn tennis is popular among the more mild sports.

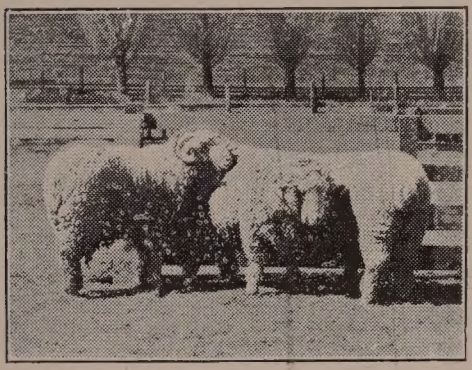
AN IMPORTANT RAILROAD CENTER

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company, recognizing Belen's advantageous location, have at an enormous outlay erected a huge concrete round-house, coal chute, icing station and other buildings necessary to the efficient operation of their immense traffic over their main line. The old depot, inadequate to longer accommodate the increased passenger patronage, gives way to a handsome concrete edifice. The old freight house shares a like fate, and a new one 200 feet long is under construction.

The extensive railroad yards with a capacity of several thousand freight cars are more than

a mile in length and laid out with a view of handling a future and much larger business.

A magnificent eating house, belonging to the



famous Harvey system, has just been completed, and while not the largest in existence, is reputed to be the most elegant in its appointments of any in the West. The cost was approximately $100,000.

Train crews are stationed here, running to the four points which mark the end of the divisions diverging from this city. This means hundreds of homes for railroad employees and their families. With the further construction and improvements contemplated by the Company, Belen will play an important part in railroad interests.

SHIPPING FACILITIES

A most valuable asset to Belen is its location as a four-line division point of the great Santa Fe System, placing its business interests beyond the danger of suffering by competition with any

other town in New Mexico, in receiving or shipping freight.

The protection which these facilities give to the commercial life of the city may be better appreciated, when one reflects upon the fact that for market for the products of this country, Belen has Denver on the north, El Paso on the south, Chicago and Galveston on the east and Los Angeles and Southern California on the west, and then upon the fact that Belen is the largest shipping point for Wool, Hay, Alfalfa, Wheat, Beans, Hides and Pelts besides the great output of Apples, Peaches and other products. Equally true is it that Belen can lay the products of the world at the doors of her merchants as cheaply as any other city within a radius bounded by the cities above mentioned. This is why Belen's wholesale houses are rapidly growing and expanding. This is the reason why no city in New Mexico affords necessities and commodities of life so cheaply.

WATER

EXCELLENT water for drinking and domestic use is secured at a depth of from ten to 25 feet below the surface of the ground. An analysis of water taken from the well of one of our townspeople proved it to be 99.97 pure. This water is sparkling, soft, palatable. Usually water is obtained by sinking a well point which is easily driven to a depth of

fifty feet if necessary. There is little or no expense attached to this method of securing good drinking water and contrasted with the laborious task, necessary in the majority of Southwestern towns, of digging a well 100 to 500 feet, and then probably to meet disappointment, in order to get water even for household use, is a fact which alone strongly argues in Belen's favor. It is so inexpensive to develop water in this locality that frequently residents prefer to use gasoline engines for pumping for all uses of water, even irrigating in this manner on a large scale.

BELEN'S OPPORTUNITY

In making a claim for attention Belen does not find it necessary to dwell on visionary prospects. The oft-repeated question, "What have you to depend on?" is readily and truthfully answered. On our splendid and productive surrounding country, **the only stable and certain resource of our entire living.**

It is safe to estimate our farming population, contributing to Belen's commercial growth, at 10,000 people. This is including a country within a scope, only, of about five miles. Thousands of tons of alfalfa, millions of pounds of wheat, car loads of fruit and other products are shipped to foreign markets, the revenue of which is distributed among our farmers. In ten years the amount of land tributary to Belen under cultivation and enriching her farmers will have quadrupled. In no sense of the word is farming an experiment.

The pay roll of the railroad at this point is estimated at $35,000.00 per month, even now, and with the construction planned and the improvements in contemplation this amount will be doubled.

Cattlemen, who find it convenient to live in

the valley while ranging their herds on the plains, and who ship their stock to the big cattle markets of the east, sheep men similarly situated, are giving Belen merchants a very profitable business.

However, Belen's most valuable asset is her loyal, energetic husttling citizens whose cry is ever Belen's progress and our country's development. so it is the avenues to success in any calling, commercial or professional are as broad and inviting in Belen as any city in the United States. There is an increasing demand for every commodity known to the retail business. There are few articles manufactured, raw material for which this territory does not produce. Few places offer more attractive inducements for financial investment or industrial activity. It is only fair to assume that with the immense tract of land susceptible to irrigation and purchaseable at low figures, and with the prodiguous irrigation enterprises being promoted by the government and private capital all of which will open new lands tributary to Belen, that she is destined to become the greatest market in the Southwest and the metropolis of New Mexico.

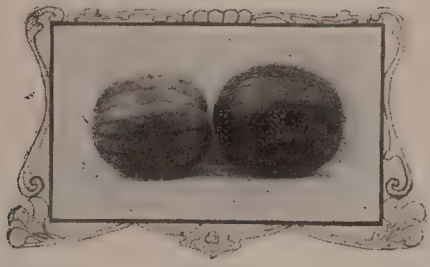
YOUR OPPORTUNITY

FRUIT

The valley surrounding Belen, while producing crops of all kinds such as wheat, alfalfa, oats, corn, potatoes and garden truck, is especially adapted to fruit raising.

The elevation of about 4,500 feet affords pure fresh air, an enemy to insect life so destructive elsewhere to fruit trees. Irrigated fruit grown under the influence of pure air and plenty of sunshine, reaches a perfection, which only this combination can produce, and the cool nights

during the latter part of the growing season imparts a sound, crisp lusciousness, especially to apples, peaches and pears, found in no other locality and makes them better prepared for foreign shipment.



Fruit is the most profitable crop per acre, in good years, in this or any other country. From three to five hundred dollars profit an acre is usual here. One can safely rely upon three good years out of five, one fair year and one years failure. This is probably a better average than in any other section of the country. Fruit farms can be purchased for prices ranging from three to five hundred dollars per acre, but occasionally for private reasons one can be secured at a far less figure.

There is plenty of untouched land ideal for fruit growing which can be purchased as cheap as $25.00 per acre.

IRRIGATION

Water for irrigation is secured from the Rio Grande by a series of community ditches. These ditches and the use of the water therefrom is presided over by some person elected by the ditch intrests for each season. A proportionate charge is made to each user of the water for the maintenance and supervision.

There has been but one year in the last twenty in which there has not been sufficient water for amply irrigating the entire cultivated lands of the valley. In instances of this kind, however, the prudent farmer does not need to worry

about his crop because by the use of a small gasoline plant he can easily water and save any crop that may be in danger. This is made possible and very inexpensive as we have before explained by the proximity of water to the surface of the ground. As a matter of fact there are many seasons when some crops are never irrigated owing to the natural sub-irrigated soil. Many farmers claim it is as cheap to irrigate by private system using the river water only to enrich the land with the silt that flows in. Nowhere on the face of the earth is water more easily, more certain or more inexpensively obtained than here. The total cost per acre of water used rarely reaches $1.50.

ALFALFA

Alfalfa yields four crops a year and each cutting will average from 1½ to 2 tons per acre. For feed this is conceded better than grass hay

and consequently the market is uniform and demand good. As little work is attached to growing alfalfa as any crop and therefore a very desirable occupation. Alfalfa will net an average of $60.00 per acre.

Good alfalfa farms are worth from $100.00 to $300.00 per acre, but the amount of cheap land readily adaptable to this product often forces the seller to more reasoanble terms.

WHEAT

For several consecutive years Belen has captured the prize for wheat at all expositions, having obtained the First Prize at the Chicago Worlds Fair, and the Gold Medal at the St. Louis and Charleston Expositions. A large flouring mill, the largest in the Territory, is a ready market for all wheat grown in this vicinity.

CANTELOUPES AND WATER-MELONS

In the last few years many farmers have given cantaloupe culture considerable attention. It having been proven that the soil here is particularly adapted in producing a sweet, large cantaloupe outrivaling in quality and flavor those favored varieties which have brought fame to several of the great cantaloupe growing districts in Colorado and California.

HFALTH AND CLIMATE

It is declared by the most eminent physicians in the United States that New Mexico is the healthiest place in the world and the conditions that warrant this statement are ideally combined in Belen.

The temperature is never extreme and the warm, dry air, replete with life-giving virtues, is an enemy to all germs causing disease, especially that of tuberculosis. Those who come here to gain strength from the ravages of disease, in a short time show no trace of their malady, and many too sick to engage in their chosen occupation where they have come from, soon pick up the thread of their calling, and in a remarkable short space of time are pursuing their vocations with, apparently, no outward indication of physical disorder. The human body requires ample rest from the nervous strain of life's activities. In the humid East a sound, restful night's sleep is impossible. No matter how excessive the heat of the day may be, the nights are always cool here, and a refreshing sleep is always assured.

SUGAR BEETS

Sugar beets grown about Belen contain a larger per centage of sacharine than those raised in Colorado beet fields, and as their cultivation expands the likelihood of a beet sugar industry is more than probable. This crop yields from 12 to 20 tons per acre of beets which nets a profit to the grower of from $50.00 to $80.00 while the tops make valuable forage for the fattening of stock. This crop is bought in the fall by buyers from the nearest factories and shipped from the nearest station to the mills.

F. L. WALRATH,
Belen, N. M.

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